

# After Abraham

*Edward Francisco*

Kierkegaard said, Lord, you were beside yourself, consumed by grief or love, psychosis or lawless incomprehensibility by which you once and for all showed yourself as no thing, nothing like anything of which we can conceive — all but one: Abraham, illegitimate father of nations, behaving unfatherly, without sensible explanation, diminishing alarm at innocent terror. Without single sign of surprise, he withdrew from the human dimension, obeying voices in a head grown loud with your confused thunder, ready to add his name of just one more lacking precise information but willing to risk the thought of all he stood to lose, though never certain.

Hell demands a theory:  
Abraham never once believed himself capable of satisfying your absurd, impossible happiness. Infinite love demands infinite sacrifice and, failing that, he knew you would demand of him, forever, the thing he was least willing to give. So he called your bluff, depended on his son's stunned faith not to believe what was happening under his eyes. By some miracle he came out of it alive. You, on the other hand, had to be put back together on your high tottering place of inhuman power where, overcome by nameless grief

and the logic of despair, you trusted  
in a trick of your own imagination,  
forgetting yourself as you knew yourself  
to be, and, sympathizing with one  
who'd overlooked your inexcusable  
carelessness, you conceived of another  
which conception alone brought  
into existence: a son, definitely  
dead by a lapse of your enforced  
concentration and the asking of a  
question whose answer made you  
victim to your own rapacious love,  
at once, and forever.